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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2007

#### In Today's Papers

##### PKK Kills 12 Civilians in Sirnak

All papers report over the weekend and today that on Saturday PKK terrorists attacked a minivan in the southeastern province of Sirnak, killing seven village guards and five construction workers employed on a nearby water channel project. The attack is the first one exclusively targeting civilians in recent years. President Abdullah Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan strongly condemned the attack. Erdogan stressed that such attacks will not interrupt the fight against terror, adding that the attack was the last throes of terrorism. The victims were laid to rest in Sirnak on Sunday with the participation of a crowd of 2,500. Hurriyet says the attack aimed to block infrastructural services in the southeast.

The pro-Kurdish DTP released a statement condemning the massacre and also blaming the ruling AKP government for making no efforts to open up political channels. "The insensitivity of the government and the fact that no measures were taken also have a role in the massacring of our 12 citizens. It is the government's duty to find the perpetrators and reveal the truth in this incident," the DTP statement said.

##### Start of the New Legislative Year

Hurriyet, Radikal, Sabah and others: Papers report that the Turkish Parliament will start the new legislative year with the speech of President Gul at 15:00 today. Mainstream Hurriyet says it is learned that in his speech Gul will make remarks to ease the concerns with regard to secularism and reiterated that the guarantee for secularism is the Presidency. Liberal Radikal says that in a meeting with representatives of labor union Turk-Is, Gul urged the government to unveil the draft constitution and to start the public debates on the draft.

Parliament Speaker Koksal Toptan will host a reception at the Parliament this evening for the start of the new legislative year. Vatan and Sabah report that the military won't attend the General

Assembly or this evening's reception because the Commanders will be in Istanbul today for the opening of the War Academies.

#### Rumors that Ralston Has Resigned

Mainstream Hurriyet cites reliable sources in reporting that General Ralston, the US Special Envoy to Combat the PKK Coordinator, has submitted his resignation to the State Department. Reportedly, General Ralston claimed that the mechanism doesn't work and he doesn't want to continue to work as the counter-terrorism special envoy. Joseph Ralston has been exerting efforts to create new policies for countering PKK terrorism, since August 2006. His Turkish counterpart was retired General Edip Baser for a long time. After Baser's resignation, his successor Ambassador Akgunay and Ralston had only one courtesy call over the phone.

#### International Kurdish Conference Held in Diyarbakir

Hurriyet, Milliyet and Radikal report the "Kurds in Turkey and Basic Requirements for Peace" conference, the first international Kurdish conference held in Diyarbakir by the German Heinrich Boll Stiftung Foundation and Diyarbakir Bar Association, called for an end to violence on Sunday, the last day of the gathering. Tennessee Technology University member Professor Michael Gunter said if Ataturk were alive he would agree with the Kurds on some points within the territorial integrity of Turkey. Columnist Cengiz Candar called on the Kurds to "be careful" while taking forward steps as not to harm the Kurdish state that has been forming in northern Iraq. "Kurds must stay away from violence and thus discourage Turkey from intervening in northern Iraq. They must also support Turkey's EU process," Candar said. The pro-Kurdish DTP deputy group chief Selahattin Demirtas turned down calls for his party to declare the PKK a terror organization. "You could not manage to resolve the problem because you have been using this rhetoric for some 30 years.

We will not name terror what you call terror. The state should

ANKARA 00002439 002 OF 002

establish channels for the PKK to lay down arms," Demirtas said.

**Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Iraq Security Agreement**  
Semih Idiz writes in mainstream Milliyet: "With the signed agreement, Iraq has committed to blocking the military, political and financial activities of PKK. Yet it is not clear how the central government will be able to persuade Iraqi Kurds on this. Iraqi Kurds demonstrated their influence by intervening in the discussion on the content of the Turkey-Iraq security agreement. Their message was basically this: if Ankara does not want us to be a part of security negotiations then we will show our power through outside interference. If the Congressional resolution regarding the division of Iraq is implemented -- which is not unlikely -- Turkey will find itself alone arguing that Baghdad is the sole counterpart for discussions. Turkey remains blind to the developments regarding the new Iraq, which was shaped by Shiites and Kurds. This approach potentially puts Turkey in some undesirable de-facto situation. Even though Turkey has the right to and is capable of taking steps despite the will of the international community, I think, we should make a good analysis before taking any steps and try not to row against the current. There are already two good examples of rowing against the current to learn from: The US in Iraq and Israel in Lebanon."

TV News:  
NTV

Domestic News

- CHP deputy chairman Onur Oymen said the anti-terror agreement signed between Turkey and Iraq was a "hollow deal."
- Prime Minister Erdogan denied reports that he implied to The Wall Street Journal that Ataturk's time was over.
- Labor unions will send a letter to the AKP government before the Council of Ministers makes a decision with regard to the wages of civil servants in 2008.
- Foreign trade deficit increased by 10.9 percent in the first eight months of the year and reached USD 40.4 billion.

International News

- EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said the EU will not meddle in headscarf debates in Turkey. "The EU's main concern is that a planned new Turkish constitution should enhance fundamental freedoms, especially freedom of expression and religion," Rehn said.

- On Sunday, the US military in Iraq said it had seized sophisticated Iranian-made surface-to-air missiles that were being used by insurgents in the war-torn country.

WILSON